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Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), by which the Council requested me to report every 30 days on the status of financial, logistical and administrative arrangements for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and on the extent of its progress towards full operational capability. The report covers significant developments during May 2008, including developments in the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur. It also provides an update on the Darfur political process.

II. Security situation

2. The security situation deteriorated throughout Darfur and in other parts of the Sudan during the reporting period. This deterioration included a deeply disturbing attack by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) on Omdurman, adjacent to Khartoum, on 10 May. On 9 May, the Government of the Sudan had informed the diplomatic community in Khartoum that JEM was advancing with some 200 to 300 vehicles from Northern Darfur towards the city of El Obeid in Northern Kordofan, aiming to attack the capital. The following day, fighting broke out in Omdurman between Government forces and JEM fighters. Reports on the number of JEM vehicles in Omdurman ranged from 80 to 300. Media and local sources reported that JEM elements took over the police station in Omdurman by force, killing six local police officers. Following a day of skirmishes, Government forces repelled the JEM fighters from Omdurman. The Government reported that some 20 to 30 JEM vehicles were destroyed and some 200 JEM personnel arrested during the crisis.

3. Vice-President Salva Kiir, in his capacity as Acting President on the day of the attack, strongly condemned the JEM action. The Government also imposed a curfew on 10 May in Omdurman and Khartoum. The curfew was subsequently lifted in Khartoum on 11 May but remained in place until 12 May in Omdurman, where Government forces reportedly conducted house-to-house searches for JEM fighters and weapons. On 12 May, Hassan al-Turabi, Chairman of the People's Congress Party, was arrested together with several other members of his party. He was released later that day after being questioned about the attack.

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4. The Government of the Sudan has accused Chad of supporting the JEM attack, and President Omer al-Bashir announced on State television on 10 May that the Sudan had severed diplomatic ties with Chad. The Government of Chad issued a statement on 11 May denying any involvement in the incident, and on 12 May announced the closure of its border with the Sudan. The Sudan boycotted a meeting of the contact group supporting the implementation of the Dakar Agreement, which had been scheduled to take place in Tripoli on 12 and 13 May. Nevertheless, those present (Chad, Congo, Eritrea, Gabon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Senegal) issued a communiqué on 12 May calling on all parties to exercise restraint.

5. In the aftermath of the attack of 10 May, movement of JEM personnel was reported by UNAMID throughout Darfur, including 19 JEM vehicles arriving in El Daein (130 km east of Nyala, Southern Darfur) on 12 May and an additional 27 JEM vehicles moving from the Dar El Salam area (80 km south-east of El Fasher) to Daba Tuga (20 km west of Mallit) in Northern Darfur on 12 and 13 May.

6. On 15 May, the Government issued a decree, initiated and signed by Minni Minnawi, to establish a committee to "remove the negative consequences of the Omdurman attack on Darfur civilians in cooperation with the legal and security bodies at both federal and state levels". As the Government continued to pursue JEM elements in Darfur, at least 11 civilians had reportedly been arrested in El Geneina and surrounding camps of internally displaced persons, as at the end of May, by the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service. Those arrested included a lawyer, a guard working for an international non-governmental organization (NGO), and two female and two male internally displaced persons.

7. In the meantime, significant clashes continued between tribal groups, between rebel movements and between rebel movements and the Government and its affiliated forces. On 8 and 15 May, fighting broke out between Zaghawa and Birgit groups south-east of Nyala, resulting in the death of at least seven people. On 15 and 19 May, fighting broke out between the Sudanese Liberation Army-Minni Minnawi (SLA-MM) and SLA-Free Will factions in Kafod (60 km north-east of El Fasher, Northern Darfur). Five SLA-MM combatants and 13 civilians were reportedly killed. On 21 May, Janjaweed militia members attacked a vehicle transporting SLA-MM soldiers near the Kabkabiya market in Northern Darfur, resulting in the death of one SLA-MM soldier. In another disturbing development, SLA-Unity expressed its support for the JEM attack on Omdurman and on 26 May made a public threat to launch attacks on Khartoum.

8. Chadian armed opposition groups have been reportedly gathering forces along the Chad-Sudan border, including near the town of Forobaranga in Western Darfur. On 16 May, the international media reported that a Chadian army helicopter fired rockets into the Sudan. From 23 to 25 May, UNAMID received reports of artillery fire and explosions from Habila, Gokar and Bedia in Western Darfur.

9. Acts of banditry continued to increase during the reporting period, with attacks against UNAMID and humanitarian personnel. A total of 20 humanitarian vehicles were hijacked, including nine trucks contracted by the World Food Programme (WFP). Two aid workers were wounded as a result of carjacking incidents, 15 aid workers were abducted, three humanitarian convoys were looted and the compounds of five humanitarian agencies were broken into. On 21 May, 50 armed men attacked four UNAMID military personnel near the Sector West headquarters in El Geneina.

The perpetrators took three AK-47 rifles, 180 rounds of ammunition and seven mobile telephone handsets. In another tragic development, on 28 May, a UNAMID Police Adviser from Uganda was found shot dead in his vehicle off the road between El Fasher and Zam Zam in Northern Darfur. The incident is being investigated by both the Government of the Sudan and UNAMID.

10. As noted in my previous report (S/2008/304), two UNAMID containers transporting WFP food supplies and UNAMID contingent-owned equipment, including ammunition, were hijacked near El Daein on 29 April. Despite ongoing efforts by the Government and UNAMID, the container carrying the equipment has not been located. UNAMID continues to search for the missing vehicle, and has established a Board of Inquiry to investigate the incident. UNAMID is also putting in place, in collaboration with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and in consultation with the Government, measures to increase the security of convoys moving from El Obeid into and throughout Darfur.

III. Humanitarian situation

11. In May alone, approximately 40,000 people were displaced as a result of fighting and insecurity. In total, 190,000 people have been displaced in the first five months of 2008. Approximately 17,100 aid workers operating in Darfur continued to assist those in need, but the suspension of convoy movements in Northern Darfur after the JEM attack of 10 May curtailed humanitarian access throughout the state. The northern corridor of Western Darfur also remained closed to humanitarian agencies as a result of insecurity. To facilitate dialogue between Government authorities and aid workers on issues related to humanitarian access, the Technical Committee supporting the implementation of the March 2007 joint communiqué on facilitation of humanitarian activities in Darfur sent teams composed of United Nations, Government and NGO representatives to El Geneina on 5 and 6 May and El Fasher on 10 and 12 May.

12. Sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence remain widespread in Darfur. UNAMID documented 11 incidents involving rape and other forms of sexual assault during the reporting period.

IV. Mission strength

13. As at 29 May, the total strength of UNAMID uniformed personnel was 7,754 troops, 338 military staff officers, 154 military observers, 1,669 individual police officers and one formed police unit of 140 personnel. A total of 135 new military personnel from Egypt joined the Operation during the month.

14. Recruitment for civilian positions has filled 1,667 out of the 5,569 authorized posts (30 per cent of full capacity). There are 475 international staff currently deployed, 1,038 national staff and 154 United Nations Volunteers. In addition, UNAMID has 74 staff on short-term temporary assignments from other missions and employs 1,702 individual contractors.

V. Deployment of the Operation

15. As noted in my last 30-day report (S/2008/304), UNAMID, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support are taking forward the enhanced deployment plan, which is aimed at achieving 80 per cent deployment of the authorized strength of UNAMID by the end of 2008. This amounts to 15,300 out of 19,555 troops, 3,018 out of 3,772 individual police officers and 12 out of 19 formed police units. Achieving this deployment target requires the following: (a) rotations of 10 infantry battalions already deployed at the United Nations standard of strength and equipment; (b) priority deployment of vital enabling units, including engineer, transportation, multi-role logistics and medical units; (c) deployment of six new infantry battalions (two from Ethiopia, two from Egypt, one from Senegal and one from Thailand) and two new companies (from Nepal) in 2008; and (d) deployment of 11 additional formed police units in 2008.

16. This enhanced deployment plan and the achievement of the 80 per cent deployment target by end of 2008 are based on the assumption that the Operation's engineering capability will be immediately reinforced. To this end, a multi-pronged strategy is being pursued, which consists of: (a) accelerated deployment of engineer units; (b) temporary transfer of UNMIS engineer assets to UNAMID; (c) a request for UNAMID troop contributors to swap one company from each incoming battalion with a pioneer company with light engineering capability; and (d) capacity-building of Sudanese local construction companies.

17. The JEM attack of 10 May caused delays in the rotations of troops already present and the deployment of new units to Darfur. Throughout the period from 10 to 17 May, airports in Darfur were closed repeatedly and the convoys of UNAMID, United Nations agencies and other international humanitarian organizations were suspended in Northern Darfur. UNAMID senior management engaged Government officials in Khartoum in order to unblock the movement of vital equipment and was reassured that the movement restrictions would be lifted.

18. Despite these challenges, the rotation of the South African battalion was successfully completed on 16 May. A Nigerian battalion also completed rotation on 20 May, although not at the United Nations standard of strength. In a tragic incident, 46 of the Nigerian soldiers who returned home on 20 May were killed on 22 May in northern Nigeria, when a fuel tanker collided with their military convoy. I once again express my deepest condolences to their families and pay tribute to them for the noble services they rendered to the people of Darfur.

19. While the disruption of movement into Darfur after the JEM attack of 10 May hampered the deployment of incoming troops and police contingents, the deployment of critical enabling units had already been delayed because the movement of equipment from Port Sudan to Darfur by road (1,400 miles) is taking an average of seven weeks. For instance, the equipment of the Egyptian transport company arrived in Port Sudan on 31 January 2008, but only 15 per cent of it had arrived in Nyala (Southern Darfur) as at 29 May. Similarly, only 14 per cent of the equipment of the Bangladeshi logistics company, which arrived in Port Sudan on 21 February, was in Nyala at time of drafting. The majority of the equipment for the Egyptian engineer company is also in transit to El Fasher. Consequently, the deployment of the advance parties of the Egyptian transport and engineer companies and the Bangladeshi logistics company, originally anticipated for June, is likely to

be delayed until July. Only the Egyptian signal company completed deployment to El Fasher during the reporting period.

20. The slow movement of the equipment from Port Sudan to Darfur is due in large part to insecurity, in addition to customs clearance processes that can take up to a month and the relatively limited number of local contractors. UNAMID convoy movements have recently become more perilous, with some containers and vehicles being hijacked on the open road from El Obeid into and within Darfur, as described in section II above. Banditry along these supply lines is causing local contractors to refuse to transport assets of the Operation. UNAMID is conducting an assessment to resume road transport of equipment following the incident of 10 May, which caused the suspension of convoy movements from El Obeid into Darfur.

21. As for the deployment of infantry battalions, the equipment of the first Egyptian battalion is in El Obeid, pending the completion of camp construction in Um Kadada (Northern Darfur). The engineering work in Um Kadada, expected to begin in early June, has been delayed, owing in part to the lack of material-handling equipment to offload heavy engineering machinery, which is required to start preparing the ground for camp construction. Pending the completion of the camp construction, UNAMID plans to airlift the equipment from El Obeid and deploy the advance party of the Egyptian battalion by early July. The equipment of the advance party of the first Ethiopian battalion is en route from El Fasher to Kulbus (Western Darfur). However, the land required to expand the Kulbus camp has not yet been appropriated by the Government. UNAMID has requested the Government to allocate land in Kulbus and all other locations.

22. While the deployment of the first battalions from Egypt and Ethiopia continues, the United Nations plans to move ahead with preparations for the deployment of the Thai battalion and two companies from Nepal, on the basis of the understanding I reached with President Al-Bashir during the Organization of the Islamic Conference summit in Dakar to deploy the Thai and Nepalese troops after the first Ethiopian and Egyptian battalions complete their deployments into Darfur. I wrote to President Al-Bashir on 6 May to confirm this agreement.

23. The deployment of formed police units has also been delayed. The equipment of the Nepalese formed police unit arrived in Port Sudan on 18 February, but only 11 per cent of the equipment had arrived in Nyala as at 25 May. The equipment of the Indonesian formed police unit arrived in Port Sudan on 25 April and has been cleared by the Sudanese customs authorities. However, the Indonesian equipment has not left for Zam Zam (Northern Darfur), owing to a breach of contract by the local companies contracted to move the equipment. Meanwhile, it is expected that Nigeria and Egypt will finalize deployment preparations in the coming weeks, with a view to deploying their formed police units to El Geneina (Western Darfur) and Greida (Southern Darfur), respectively. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations Police Division is also in the process of reviewing preliminary offers from several African countries to identify the remaining seven formed police units.

24. In order to resolve the bottlenecks of equipment movement from Port Sudan through El Obeid to Darfur, the United Nations is increasing its capacity to airlift equipment from El Obeid into Darfur, and is also pursuing the possibility of airlifting equipment directly from troop-contributing countries into Darfur on a case-by-case basis. The use of large aircraft, such as Antonov-124s, will be required

for the airlifting of heavy engineering equipment, and UNAMID is seeking Government consent for the landing of Antonov-124s in Nyala.

25. For the accelerated deployment of UNAMID, sustained cooperation from the Government will be of central importance, including in particular through the provision of land and expedited customs clearance. Existing camps need to be upgraded and in some cases expanded in order to accommodate incoming and rotating troops and police contingents, including in Kulbus for the first Ethiopian battalion and in Zam Zam for the Indonesian formed police unit. Land for new camps must also be obtained and prepared in Korma, Seleia, Buram, Habila and Um Dukhum. In its request of 9 May, UNAMID sent the Government a comprehensive list of the land required in a total of 35 locations; a formal response has not yet been received.

26. Ongoing engineer work for the construction of supercamps in El Fasher, Nyala, Zalingei and El Geneina has been undertaken by Pacific Architects and Engineers, Incorporated (PAE). However, there is some uncertainty as to whether works will be completed before the end of the contract with PAE. There is therefore an urgent requirement to sustain and augment UNAMID engineer capacity, as more units are expected to be deployed in the second half of 2008. In this context, engineer elements from UNMIS are being transferred to UNAMID on a temporary basis. As part of this effort, China has confirmed its willingness to relocate elements of the Chinese engineer company deployed in UNMIS Sector 2 (Wau) to Nyala for a 90-day operational period, which is planned to begin in early July.

27. Physical verification of assets of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) continued during the reporting period. UNAMID has also established a coordination mechanism to address third-party claims, including lease arrangements for former AMIS campsites, as multiple individuals have contested the ownership of land in those locations. The handover of previous AMIS equipment and assets to UNAMID is expected to be completed by the end of June 2008, while other elements of the AMIS liquidation process, including land and claims issues, are likely to continue for a longer period.

28. With regard to the deployment of civilian staff, UNAMID continued to focus on the recruitment of senior staff for both mission support and substantive posts. In consultation with the African Union, UNAMID has selected a Chief of Staff, who is expected to arrive in Darfur by late June. UNAMID has also identified senior budget, training, administrative and gender officers who will be deployed to the Operation on an accelerated basis. Recruitment of civilians continues to be a challenge, however, as many candidates have declined invitations for interviews and offers of appointment due to the harsh living and working conditions in Darfur.

29. Despite ongoing efforts, critical mission capabilities are still lacking, namely, 18 medium utility helicopters, six attack helicopters, one aerial reconnaissance unit, one medium transport unit, one heavy transport unit and one multi-role logistics unit.

VI. Operations of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

30. In spite of movement restrictions put in place by the Government after the JEM attack of 10 May, UNAMID continued to undertake patrolling and investigation activities during the month of May. For the month, UNAMID conducted 955 confidence-building patrols, 84 escort patrols, 91 administrative patrols and 64 investigative patrols throughout Darfur, as well as providing convoy security as required. In addition, UNAMID dispatched a team to Um Sidir and Shegeg Karo in Northern Darfur to assess the impact of the Government bombing on 4 May, which killed 19 civilians. The assessment missions to Um Sidir and Shegeg Karo were delayed for several days, as the Government did not grant UNAMID access to the area. The missions nevertheless observed that livestock and properties, including the market in Shegeg Karo, had been destroyed, although a school in the area had not been destroyed as previously reported by the media.

31. In Sectors South and West, UNAMID organized community policing training for 388 internally displaced persons, with a view to providing basic skills for establishing law and order in camps of internally displaced persons. In parallel, the UNAMID police component provided basic training on human rights and gender issues for the Government police. These are critical efforts to improve relations between the police forces and local populations, which remain tense. On 12 May, the Central Reserve Police attacked a camp of internally displaced persons in Tawila, Northern Darfur, after a Sudanese police officer was found dead near the camp. The local police opened fire indiscriminately, looted and burned huts and destroyed the market in the area. As a result of this attack, two civilians were reportedly killed, and approximately 20,000 of the 24,000 people from the town of Tawila and the camp of internally displaced persons were displaced. Several hundreds of those displaced sought shelter within the UNAMID premises in Tawila. UNAMID coordinated with humanitarian agencies to provide temporary assistance, while intensifying 24-hour patrols. On 18 May, the internally displaced persons began returning to the Tawila camp, and UNAMID continues to monitor the situation closely.

32. UNAMID senior leadership continues to engage Government officials in Khartoum through regular meetings. Weekly meetings to address security issues are also undertaken with local government authorities at the sector level. In addition, UNAMID has established regular contacts with rebel movements in all three sectors.

33. On 5 May, the Sudan Consortium held a closed meeting on Darfur, focused on addressing the humanitarian and security situation in Darfur. Participants in the session stressed the requirement to find a credible political solution based on the Darfur Peace Agreement and in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

34. The fifth population and housing census was carried out from 22 April to 6 May. According to the Government Census Bureau, the enumeration process did not take place in most of the rebel-held territories, as well as the areas controlled by SLA-MM and parts of Southern Darfur affected by ongoing tribal fighting. The majority of internally displaced persons, unwilling to be counted while in camps, did not participate in the enumeration. Preliminary estimates by international observers indicate that out of a total of 81 camps of internally displaced persons

throughout Darfur, approximately 25 per cent fully participated in the census, 10 per cent participated partially and more than half did not participate at all.

VII. Political process

35. Despite the ongoing mediation efforts by the United Nations and African Union Special Envoys, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, the events of May confirmed the continued lack of political will among the parties to cease hostilities and pursue substantive negotiations. Following the visits of the Special Envoys to Darfur in April 2008, the Joint Mediation Support Team continued to engage the Government of the Sudan and representatives of the movements that have not signed the Darfur Peace Agreement towards convening informal consultations on security issues. The main aim of the consultations was to establish an all-inclusive dialogue among the parties on security matters, thereby laying the foundation for an agreement on cessation of hostilities, and to build trust among the parties. However, while the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM)-Unity and SLM-Abdul Shafie agreed to attend the consultations, SLM-Abdul Wahid, JEM and the United Resistance Front indicated that they were unwilling to participate at this stage.

36. The mediation will continue to engage the parties to determine the best way forward. Special Envoys Eliasson and Salim held informal consultations with regional and international partners in Geneva on 4 and 5 June 2008 to assess the political situation in view of recent events on the ground and to discuss ways to take the mediation process forward. The Special Envoys called for the parties to exercise maximum restraint, abstain from all further military action and engage in the political process. They also stressed the urgent need for the normalization of relations between Chad and the Sudan and for progress on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, recognizing the importance of tackling in a comprehensive manner the national and regional dimensions of the Darfur conflict.

37. The Joint Mediation Support Team, UNAMID and the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation also continued to coordinate closely in engaging civil society constituencies in Darfur on various issues related to the peace process, through regular meetings in all three states. Capacity-building activities have been conducted in some areas to facilitate the participation of civil society actors.

VIII. Financial arrangements

38. The General Assembly, by its resolution 62/232, authorized the establishment of a special account for UNAMID and appropriated the amount of $1,275.7 million for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, an equivalent of $106.3 million per month, for its establishment.

39. As at 30 April 2008, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNAMID amounted to approximately $684.3 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $2,120.9 million.

40. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), paragraph 5 (a), reimbursement of troop costs associated with contingent personnel deployed to AMIS for the period from 1 October to 31 December 2007 has been made.

41. On 5 June, the Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution recommending that the General Assembly approve the UNAMID budget for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 in the total amount of $1.59 billion.

IX. Observations

42. The JEM attack of 10 May on Omdurman provided a stark reminder that peace in Darfur remains elusive. I have condemned the action taken by JEM. More broadly, the ongoing violence in the region is a clear sign that the parties continue to pursue a military solution to the conflict, rather than committing to a ceasefire and political negotiations. The ongoing violence has also hindered the deployment of UNAMID, which struggles to carry out its mandate by continuing patrols, escorts and the protection of humanitarian convoys despite limited resources. At the same time, those who are deployed to assist the people of Darfur have increasingly become the target of armed banditry. This month, UNAMID lost a Ugandan police officer. Many aid workers have also been victims of carjackings or abductions. Humanitarian access continues to be denied in parts of Darfur, while reports of food shortage as the rainy season approaches suggest that the humanitarian situation may further deteriorate. All parties must do their utmost to facilitate humanitarian access and protect civilians, and immediately cease acts of violence against those who are working to assist the people of Darfur. I also reiterate my call for all parties to lay down their weapons and begin substantive negotiations.

43. Sixty years of peacekeeping have taught us that our operations can be most effective when there is a cessation of hostilities, when the parties consent to the deployment of a peacekeeping operation and, most importantly, when a viable political agreement provides a foundation of peace to keep. Events during the reporting period underscore that, in Darfur, none of these conditions are in place. The fighting continues, with UNAMID personnel under threat, and the parties still lack the will to pursue political solutions.

44. A peacekeeping operation, even one the size of UNAMID at full strength, cannot create peace on behalf of those on the ground. Only with the commitment of the parties can the peace process move forward. The JEM attack on Omdurman and the continued fighting between rebel groups and the Government and its allied forces indicate that the parties are not ready for serious talks. While we continue to press for the resumption of peace talks, a re-evaluation of our engagement with the parties may be necessary, in consultation with countries in the region and other actors with leverage on the parties and their supporters. In this context, the African Union and the United Nations have been working to appoint a joint chief mediator, who, I believe, will build on the work of the United Nations and African Union Special Envoys, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, and play a central role in revitalizing the mediation process.

45. As the fighting continues in Darfur, the national political process in the Sudan will be entering a critical stage of electoral preparations, with the completion of the fifth population and housing census. Unless the security situation in Darfur improves and the parties are prepared to participate in the 2009 elections and the subsequent process leading to the 2011 referendum, the people of Darfur and their views may not be reflected in those historic opportunities, outlined by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, to shape the country's future political framework.

46. While the presence of an effective peacekeeping operation in Darfur is not a guarantee of peace and stability in the Sudan and the region, it would make an important contribution to the attainment of that goal. To achieve the deployment goals that have been set for UNAMID by the end of 2008, it is critical that the Government continue to support the Mission, including through the expedited provision of land and customs clearance. Full Government compliance with the status-of-forces agreement with UNAMID, including in terms of freedom of movement, will be of paramount importance. Support for the temporary transfer of engineer elements from UNMIS to UNAMID will also be crucial.

47. The effectiveness of peacekeeping operations also depends in large part on the commitment of Member States to provide requisite resources. In this context, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all troop- and police-contributing countries and donors, including the Friends of UNAMID, for their continued support for the Operation. I would also like to encourage those Member States contributing units that are scheduled to deploy in 2008 to provide their final lists of equipment to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations without further delay to facilitate the complex deployment arrangements.

48. In the meantime, the Secretariat will continue to work with UNAMID, Member States and the Government of the Sudan to accelerate the arrival of incoming troops and police contingents. I will work to expand the Operation's absorption capacity by: increasing the Mission's engineering capability; agreeing with the Government to enhance security arrangements for critical overland movement of equipment and other UNAMID assets, possibly in cooperation with UNMIS; establishing an air bridge between El Obeid and Darfur for the movement of priority equipment; exploring the airlifting of equipment from troop- and police-contributing countries into Darfur; and seeking from the Government the provision of expedited customs clearance, land and permission for UNAMID to fly at night and use large aircraft in order to transport heavy engineering equipment.

49. Peace in Darfur is intimately linked to peace and stability in the region, and I am concerned about the deterioration of relations between the Sudan and Chad. I urge the Governments of both countries to honour their commitment under the Dakar Agreement and resume their participation in the contact group meetings. I also call upon other Member States to facilitate a constructive dialogue between the Sudan and Chad. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the timely visit of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping, and of the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra, to the region shortly after the JEM attack of 10 May. On 18 May, both Chairperson Ping and Commissioner Lamamra paid their first visit to Darfur in their new African Union capacities. I take this opportunity to recognize the important role that the African Union continues to play in the search for a peaceful settlement of the Darfur conflict, in the normalization of relations between Chad and the Sudan and in the ongoing efforts to expedite the full deployment of UNAMID.

50. Finally, I am deeply concerned about the reported lack of cooperation of the Government with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, as reported to the Security Council on 5 June 2008. I urge the Government to comply with its international obligations and to cooperate with the Court, as I am convinced that there can be no sustainable peace without justice. Impunity for the serious crimes committed in Darfur cannot be accepted.